2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

in the ordinary way. Rats are a very popular item of diet and so are nearly all wild animals, though tiger-flesh is not usually taken.

The Muria, especially those living in the east of Kondagaon, where there is still a wonderful supply of game, have a good knowledge of the habits of animals and birds, both practical and fanciful. The tiger and bear appear frequently in folk-tales and songs. Of birds there are many stories. It is curious that the Muria attribute to such birds as the quail and the crane habits of jealousy which are strikingly absent from their own women. The female quail is believed to be possessed by the fear that her husband will be going to other women and is always calling *gudur gudur*. When she lays eggs, 'she makes him sit on them or he might go to other women forgetting his own children'. The female crane also calls her husband with the cry *tarank tarank tenr tenr*. When she lays her eggs in a hollow tree, 'in order to prevent him going after other women while she is hatching them, she makes him sit on them himself and closes the opening of the hollow with mud except for a

FIG. 8. Pellet-bow
Length 5'

little hole through which she feeds him'. The titur got its name and its cry when at a human marriage the Belosa in charge of all arrangements found she had lost her clitoris (*tila*). As she was looking for it, she met the bird and borrowed one from her. She promised to return it but never did so, and so now the bird is always saying '*Tila de*', 'Give me my clitoris'. The golden oriole's cry is imitated by the chelik as *peking pude, peking pude* or 'girl's vagina, girl's vagina' and motiari are said to get very embarrassed when they hear it. The gandachirai, or Greater Indian Night-jar, is supposed to call *tuk-tuk tuk tuk-tuk tuk* which resembles the noise *tukrus tukrus* of the Ganda's shuttle as he weaves his cloth. The chelik believe that if they can guess the name of the tree on which the bird is sitting, the thread will break. They call out the names of all the trees they can think of and when the bird falls silent they say they have guessed the right tree and the weaver's thread has snapped.

The Muria have ideas about the hare: it comes from the moon; it never drinks water, but only dew; in the rains it catches the falling water. If a man sees the hare in the moon move, he will get a fit. During the last famine, some Muria kept themselves alive on hare's turd, and even now they eat it, cooked into a soup, for it is considered nourishing and medicinal.

Before there was sun and moon it was by the peacock's cry that men knew the time, and still today the bird calls *Eh ho eh ho mane*, so that all who live in Nadumbhum (the Middle World) know that evening has come. When it cries in the dark, they know that dawn is breaking.

For hunting, the Muria's chief weapon is still the bow and arrow, though some of them have old guns which they regard with great reverence and often call by special names like Maoligundi.[1] Spears are used and pellet-bows,

[1] Old guns are worshipped by the Maharaja at the Dussera festival in Jagdalpur.